



# PREVENTING SUICIDE IN CONSTRUCTION

## Toolbox Talk

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Jobsite: \_\_\_\_\_ Discussion Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

The construction industry has the highest rate of male suicide at 53.2 per 100,000 U.S. workers. That rate is four times greater than the national average and five times greater than that of all other construction fatalities combined. Almost four out of five suicides in construction are men.

Crises like the Coronavirus global health pandemic (COVID-19) increase stress and anxiety as workers fear for the wellbeing of themselves and their loved ones, worry about losing their jobs, paying their bills, and caring for their children.

## WHY ARE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AT RISK FOR SUICIDE?

- “Tough guy” culture & mental health stigma
- Unsteady employment due to seasonal changes and/or economic downturn
- Chronic pain caused by manual labor
- Stress due to time constraints, poor working conditions & sleep disruption
- Travel that may take workers away from family & friends
- Easy access to means of suicide (e.g. high places)

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE WARNING SIGNS?

- Talking about self-harm, self-destructive behavior
- Self-criticism or self-hatred
- Withdrawing from others
- Expressing no hope for the future
- Decreased productivity
- Talking about being a burden
- Extreme mood swings
- Increased tardiness
- Absenteeism
- Giving away tools or other personal items that hold meaning or value

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

**Don't ignore the warning signs. Speak up if you are worried.** Remember that you cannot give somebody the idea to commit suicide by asking. If they are contemplating suicide, they have already thought about it. But you can potentially stop them from hurting themselves by showing you care and asking them about it.

**Offer help and support.** Feeling connected to others is crucial for people who may be experiencing anxiety, depression or who might be considering suicide. The COVID-19 crisis has only heightened feelings of isolation with stay-at-home and social distancing orders. Reaching out to those who have become disconnected and offering support can be a lifesaving act.

**Respond quickly & seek help if you believe a friend, family member or coworker is in crisis.** Notify a supervisor or HR with your concerns right away. Call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline for ideas on ways to help.

## STRUGGLING?

### IT IS OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP!

- Call 911
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK
- Crisis Text Line: text Home to 741741
- Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990, TTY 1-800-846-8517, or text TalkWithUs for English or Hablanos for Spanish to 66746